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QUESTIONS NEED ANSWERS

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NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS' INTENTIONS
FOR 1948

PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLICATION

Crop acreages as of early March indicate an eight percent decrease. Weather conditions prior to that time had been unfavorable for field work, since last September. The resulting intended small grain acres left unplanted, plus the required 214,000 acres reduction in tobacco have left a large potential crop acreage available for increasing other crops. Until the spring outlook becomes more favorable and growers catch up with their spring work, they are reluctant to estimate usages of the extra land available.

Reasonably if field conditions are favorable, enabling growers to have opportunities, they may increase needed and economic crops that require a minimum of hand labor. These include hays and other crops which permit of machinery usages in planting and harvesting.

While corn shows little increase, good weather may result in more than this 47,000 acres or two percent increase. Summer legumes including soybeans, cowpeas and peanuts show prospects of increases. Congressional laws prohibit intentions to plant cotton information, therefore this crop is not reckoned in their acreage intentions for this year - 1948.

USDA COUNCIL

The USDA County Council, which is the successor of the War Board, was originally planned by the Secretary of Agriculture for the purposes of unifying and coordinating the Government's activities. Whereas, before 1941 each agency was on an independent basis, it was realized that for war purposes, all should concentrate and coordinate their efforts to the winning of the war. The advantages gained were so definite that its continuation even on a county basis, was deemed advisable and effective. While the Crop Reporting Service has no county offices or official representatives, it is represented on the State Council as a member of the USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

As may be observed in the upper right-hand box, certain questions have come to the mind of everyone who became interested in agricultural estimates, aside from the figures they show.

It is the purpose of this sheet to offer some explanations and clarifications of the sources, methods and otherwise answer some of the questions mentioned. These will not be based on technical knowledge but experiences gained through many years of collecting, disseminating and checking crop estimates.

To the average individual, or even to some of our leaders, it seems almost impossible to reckon a crop before it is nearly mature, or that is, estimate its probable final production. At the same time, most of our farmers are constantly estimating what they expect to accomplish over a given period and under certain weather conditions. It is no more unreasonable to forecast a crop than it is a man's probable ability. As a matter of fact, it is easier to estimate the crop, because its yields are more uniform under given conditions. At any rate, the crop stays in the same place, whereas, a man moves about and is influenced by many different environments.

Good estimates for the country as a whole can be made from reports of less than one percent of the farms. State estimates require several times as many. It is even more of a problem to estimate for a county, since most of the farms must be represented. It is almost impossible to estimate accurately for an individual farm. Thus, the county is about the smallest unit that present day methods provide for approximations.

Inquiries in the Chatham County Commercial broiler area in November resulted in the hatcheries and dealers in broiler purpose chicks agreeing to furnish weekly reports on eggs set, chicks hatched and chicks placed within this well defined producing area. The reporting service was begun with the new year. Since then, excellent cooperation has resulted in a weekly release entitled "Broiler Report", which includes information from areas from Connecticut to Texas.

HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH THESE FEATURES?

A group of USDA officials, after making investigations in several southern states, asked the question: "What is responsible for the fact that farmers in North Carolina appear to know more about their crop acreages than farmers in any other state visited?" Upon investigation, these officials concluded that the Annual Farm Census, which is participated in by 98% of all farmers, was responsible for N. C. farmers being so well informed as to crop acreages. The 1947 Legislature passed a law abolishing the Annual Farm Census.

THIS JOB IS NO APRIL FOOL JOKE



GENERAL PURPOSE ISSUE

INTRODUCTION

The mid-month issue of the Farm Report, through March 15, 1948, has been published for thirteen consecutive months. The mid-month issue of the Farm Report has regularly featured subjects such as farm cash receipts, milk production, prices paid and received by farmers, current price indices, livestock numbers, poultry and eggs, prospective acreage of crops and a weather summary for the current month. The objective of the Farm Report was stated in May 1947 issue as follows: "In this publication can be found current information on a variety of farm subjects."

All of the features carried should be of interest to agriculturally minded people in North Carolina. The consolidation of individual releases, gives an overall picture of the agricultural situation in the state plus some national news highlights. Subjects are selected on the basis of their news value during the current month. It is hoped that this report will render service to farmers and agricultural leaders, by enabling them to better keep abreast of the agricultural situation in North Carolina.

Most of the credit for this publication should go to our loyal reporters, who report periodically on all phases of Agriculture in North Carolina. These reporters have and continue to serve the Department of Agriculture faithfully, and without them this information would be impossible."

On the basis of our experience in working on all phases of this publication we believe that it has gained approval. Since its beginning consideration has been given to the advisability of printing and distributing two issues of the Farm Report each month. It has now been decided to publish a "general" issue on the first of each month and to continue the mid-month "report" issue as in the past. The "general" issue to be published on the first of each month will be on a trial basis, that is, it will be continued or abolished according to the wishes of you who receive it. Likewise, if continued, it will contain those subjects and information desired by those receiving it.

We wish to take this opportunity to solicit any and all suggestions, critical or otherwise, pertaining to the contents and usefulness of the information carried. The number and nature of comments received from readers will determine in the final analysis, whether this "general" issue will continue to be published. Hence, you now have both an opportunity and a responsibility in determining its fate. Ask yourself: "From my standpoint how could this report be improved?", "what subjects or information would best serve my needs?", "Is the information contained in this general issue basically educational and practical?", and "is the information contained in this report useful to me in planning and practicing a more balanced agricultural program in my Community?"

CONVINCING THE SKEPTIC

When our statistician realized the lack of interest and response of his Georgia high school vocational students during his first year of teaching, he looked about for remedies. Simple prizes were offered for practical applications of the lessons. The results were surprisingly good and especially helpful for him. It was so convincing that the application as well as theory has been basic to all of his work since. He believes that neither our colleges nor high schools include enough farming applications along with their lecture work. Laboratories serve primarily as testing or proving grounds. Convictions and permanent impressions result from "seeing is believing". This applies to all education.

Indicated U.S. acreage of corn at average yields would produce about 3 billion bushels, one-fifth larger than last year.

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED

This acquaintance issue offers the opportunity for presenting various features of the Crop Reporting Service activities. Some little understood but important and needful classes of services may be grouped. Each may include weekly, monthly, quarterly or periodic applications. For example Broiler Reports appear weekly. The threshers surveys, like the abolished farm census, occur annually. These include some of the 400 reports developed annually:

Farm Census, county acres and productions	annual
Threshers Records, ideal for county yields	annual
Prices farmers receive and prices paid	annual
Dairy and Poultry Reports	monthly
Commercial Broiler Reports	weekly
Weather and Crop Reports	weekly
Truck Crops Reports	monthly
Rural Carrier Surveys	quarterly
Slaughter Reports	monthly
Hundreds of special reports developed	variable

OTHER FEATURES AVAILABLE

How a report is developed.
Statistical methods simplified.
The Crop Reporter advantages and needs.
Uses of agricultural estimates.
Reliability of Crop Reports.
Scope of Crop Reporting Service activities.
The agricultural leader and his needs.
The farmer's dependence on statistics.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

The required scope and load of work already existing in the Crop Reporting Service is excessive. This Farm Report type of Service is not required. It would not be undertaken excepting for the so obvious needs for the better appreciation and consequent usage of farm statistics by the local agriculture leaders, who in turn translate it to their practical farmers.

Unless this sheet does appeal and does gain approval and does win definite cooperative aid and promotion, then it should be discontinued, excepting for the mid-month Farm Report issue, which has already gained approval. So it is really up to you as an agricultural leader to decide "What of the future?" Your suggestions, approvals, constructive comments, assurances of aid and usages, wishes and other ideas are invited as essential to this effort.

Its effectiveness will be determined by you who receive it and by your written comments. Merely taking for granted that it will be a definite vote against it. The statisticians know that clarifications, examples of usages, and values are needed, but until this need is requested, then the time is not ripe to offer it. The loss of the farm census is definite evidence of an existing serious situation or an indifference that results in decay rather than growth.

As of late March North Carolina's farming is in quite an uncertain condition. The last half of the month averaged above average in temperature and offered opportunities for field work. Thus fruit trees progressed rapidly, inviting serious losses if freezing weather returns. While field work was much behind as month earlier by the first of April progress was rapid. Home gardening was well advanced.

ONLY A CLEARING HOUSE SERVICE

The Crop Reporting Service neither originates nor uses its own products. It serves merely as a clearing-house office. It has no paid representatives outside of the Raleigh office. Those who furnish the report information are usually those who need it the most. Long experiences have proved that "participation is the key to appreciation". Thus volunteer reporters have long proved to be the best source of state information, other than actual enumerations, which latter are expensive in time and money, unless complete facts are needed for county and local purposes.

To develop the best clearing-house services the local agricultural leaders should join the corps of reporters, so as to learn all of the angles and especially to better appreciate the needs for and values of these services. Oddly enough the only agency serving all agricultural interests, is the Crop Reporting Service. The reason is that the full scope of agriculture is covered.

Of course you want to have proof of this broad statement. Whether banker, railroad, mail order house, automobile distributor, farm machinery manufacturer, farm organization, seed and fertilizer interests, specialized agricultural service agency, newspapers, researchers, educators, doctors, or others need to make plans regarding agricultural welfare. They need farm statistics. Obviously the farmers themselves are no exception. The farmers' salvation is no less through individual study and planning than through hard work, long hours and multiple risks.

The agricultural statistician needs to know farm work in order to develop dependable crop estimates. This means that farm rearing including field and barn work, are requirements. In observing crops he must see and judge both sides of the road in order to know what is going on in fields. When he returns to study the hundreds of farmers' reports he is then able to better understand the reporter's information and arrive at reasonable estimates.

EDUCATION IS RELATIVE AND AVAILABLE

Education represents acquired knowledge. A man may obtain several college degrees and still be poorly educated outside of his own narrow field. Another may not have any college opportunities and still acquire an excellent general education and be successful.

Mr. T. B. Parker became one of North Carolina's best known and liked agricultural leaders, with a national reputation. A college president said that he was one of the best educated leaders that he had ever known. Yet this man had only 13 months of school privileges, in single teacher schools without benefit of modern facilities.

All this is to say that it isn't so much the school or place as it is the individual determination that yields one's education. With present day bulletins, periodicals, local leadership advice, research reports and other sources of scientific and practical information, anyone may acquire an excellent education at no appreciable money cost.

Since very few of our present high school students will seek agricultural college education and only a rare one of these becomes a practical farmer, we must look to our high schools for our future farmers. In turn, there should be provided the best facilities for giving these self confidence through instruction and practice that will enable them to know how to do for themselves whether from economic thinking or practical applications.

MATURE FARMER EDUCATION

Perhaps the most important purpose of this sheet is for high school vocational agriculture educational purposes. By all odds, the most of our farmers come from this group. Very few go on to college, and even those rarely go back to the farm.

Of course, crop reporters and other mature farmers have equal advantages if they are interested. In the main, it is the potential future farmer that is the one to be considered. The vocational agriculture teachers of North Carolina are using this publication to that end. Thus, the educational angles are very important in order to train the students into the best understanding, appreciation and usage of agricultural estimates reports.

AGRICULTURAL LEADER INFLUENCE

Just as the vocational agriculture teacher is to instruct and lead the high school students, our agricultural leaders must do the same toward their committees and local leaders. These, after all, are the ones who have the greatest influence in the community. The more they understand about this basic information, or agricultural estimates, the better they can perform their own duties and anticipate future problems, as well as the supply and demand of agricultural products. Actually, all of us need to know more about the whys and wherefores of this subject, in order to benefit most from it, as it applies to the business side of farming.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION

Farmers are often skeptical of crop reports until they are convinced that we "know our onions". An illustration suffices. A state leader was invited to a farmer's home. The wife quite evidently resented the intrusion all evening. Next morning the visitor was up at dawn of a real cold morning. To keep warm he tackled the wood pile and stacked the stove wood on the kitchen porch. The lady was amazed. At breakfast it was evident from words, actions and food that he was welcomed. In fact for many years afterward she asked her husband to have this man back. A simple act had done the trick that had a lasting effect.

A farmer of a group was skeptical of the reliability of crop reports. A crop reporter said: "Let's try an experiment. Each of you estimate the distance between this and that point. I can probably come nearer to it than any single one, based on my reporting experiences." (He knew the trick.) As he collected each written estimate he mentally added them and divided the total by the number of slips. Then someone asked: "But what is your guess?" He replied: "Mine is an estimate, not a guess," and he gave the average. The measured distance was 63 feet and 4 inches. The average of slips was 63 feet and 1 inch. The nearest single estimate was 65 feet, excepting the crop reporter's 63 feet figure. The amazement was relieved only when he explained its simplicity - not of his judgment, but of how he got his figure. Thus they understood and remembered his explanation, as well as forgave the reporter's seeming conceitful attitude.

When state crop reporting service offices were begun in 1915 North Carolina was rated lowest in the United States in Agricultural Statistics. As of 1947 it was rated one of the three best in the output of services and dependability of results. Now with the loss of its most valuable source of farmer information, the Annual Farm Census, the only source of County information, you may expect it to lose a part of its present outstanding recognition.

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FARM REPORT

NO. 14

MUST FIRST REALIZE THE NEED

A well known farmer mixed his own commercial fertilizers according to his own formulae, which he had acquired from reading and study of agricultural papers, bulletins, and books. His boys were familiar with the dirty work and wondered why their father didn't buy ready mixed fertilizers like others did, so they asked him. He tried to explain, but the main impressions were that their father was quite an educated man, but afterward wondered why farmers were buying 300 to 700 pounds of sand and dirt in each ton, when the high grade product served just as well, by applying fewer pounds per acre at less cost of labor, bags, knowledge and space.

It was this kind of thinking that resulted in one of his boys taking a college general agricultural course. He still thinks it was an excellent course for potential farmers. Present day rural vocational schools offer much better opportunities for farmer education than existed 50 - 40 - 30 - 20 or even ten years ago in high schools.

The Federal and State Cooperative Reporting Service is here-in offering its facilities as an aid to this purpose. Leaders familiar with the developing of program planning realize the essential importance of economic statistics as working materials.

FARMERS 1948 CROP ACREAGE INTENTIONS

The table below gives the pertinent facts of state and national farmers crop planting intentions. To provide pertinent comparisons the acreages planted during the ten years 1937-1946 are shown for their average acreages. Then the 1947 reported intentions and 1948 acres are shown, together with this year's percent of last year's plantings.

The required reduction in flue-cured tobacco acreage explains that reduction. The unfavorable fall planting conditions explain North Carolina's reduction of barley and oats, and also for the wheat and rye, previously reported. It is really too early to estimate hays, which are often planted as catch or opportune crops.

Irish potatoes were planted under problem weather conditions in this state. Sweet potatoes are still a question mark as to final plantings. Peanuts may be increased if favorable spring conditions prevail, and if growers find labor and field conditions permit.

The main value of these estimates is to get the farmer's general thinking and THEN to use this information in REVIS-ING their own actual plantings in the light of the intention facts available. Thus these intentions do not indicate the expected or forecasted acreages, which latter will be first secured and published early in July.

CROPS	PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1948										
	NORTH CAROLINA						UNITED STATES				
	AVERAGE 1937-1946			ACREAGE PLANTED			AVERAGE 1937-1946			ACREAGE PLANTED	
	ACREAGE PLANTED	YIELD PER PLANTED ACRE	1947	INDICATED 1948	1948 % OF 1947	UNIT OF YIELD	ACREAGE PLANTED	YIELD PER PLANTED ACRE	1947	INDICATED 1948	1948 % OF 1947
	(000)		(000)	(000)	%		(000)		(000)	(000)	%
CORN, ALL	2,358	21.6	2,160	2,203	102	BU.	91,696	30.7	86,168	86,131	100.0
OATS	368	20.4	518	440	85	BU.	42,130	29.2	42,501	45,709	107.5
BARLEY	36	19.2	43	37	85	BU.	14,632	20.5	12,030	12,660	105.2
ALL HAY*	1,199	.98	1,225	1,200	98	TONS	73,018	1.34	75,291	74,215	98.6
IRISH POTATOES	86	107	72	70	97	BU.	2,897	135.9	2,146.6	2,162.1	100.7
SWEET POTATOES	75	104	64	60	94	BU.	733.2	88.7	617.5	560.1	90.7
TOBACCO*											
TYPE 11	251.9	928	311	227	73	LBS.	350.1	928	425.0	316.0	74.0
TYPE 12	318.0	1,039	395	288	73	LBS.	318.0	1,039	395.0	288.0	73.0
TYPE 13	73.6	1,044	94	71	76	LBS.	182.9	1,028	230.0	170.0	74.0
ALL FLUE CURED*	643.5	996	800	586	73	LBS.	954.7	985	1,183.2	876.5	74.0
TYPE 31 (BURLEY)	8.8	1,181	9.6	9.5	99	LBS.	422.5	1,024	418.7	410.8	98.0
ALL TOBACCO*	652.3	999	809.6	595.5	74	LBS.	1,644.1	1,008	1,875.3	1,528.4	81.5
SOYBEANS**	362		363	363	100		10,944		12,894	11,659	90.4
COWPEAS**	150		55	55	100		2,710		1,143	1,039	90.9
PEANUTS**	285		311	320	103		3,254		4,156	3,988	96.0
SORGHUMS, ALL PURPOSES	27		27	22	81		16,936		11,700	12,983	111.0

* Acreage harvested

** Grown alone for all purposes - partly duplicated in hay acreage